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# IF THIS BE ALL

BY MILDRED HOWELLS

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If this be all, and when we die, we die,  
Then life is but a wanton, monstrous lie;  
And of the hapless creatures that draw breath,  
We, who seem flower and crown, rank far below  
The least of living things that does not know  
The dread of loss, the certainty of death.

If pain and sorrow are without a scheme,  
Dealt out by chance, then like an evil dream  
Of some dark fiend, this smiling, gracious earth;  
If we that hunger, never shall be filled,  
The sooner that our empty hearts are stilled,  
The better for them, and their aching dearth.

Yet close, I feel, there wraps us all around,  
Some mighty force, some mystery profound,  
And, through my doubts and ignorance, I trust  
The power that bound with laws the moon and tide,  
And hung the stars in heavenly spaces wide,  
Must, by their witness, be both wise and just.

MILDRED HOWELLS.